

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:JWSWIHART:JKB

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C - JDOBBINS

CU/WE - RSTRAUS

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S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL GENOA

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 010328

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PROP, SCUL, IT

SUBJECT: BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS IN THE RED BELT

1. DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH THE EMBASSY ON THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE ON PLANS FOR BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS IN AREAS UNDER COMMUNIST ADMINISTRATION AND, IN THIS CONTEXT, THE QUESTION OF SISTER-CITY RELATIONSHIPS.

2. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, THE USG CANNOT DIVIDE ITALY INTO POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE REGIONS, PROVINCES, OR CITIES. TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD AT BEST PROVE TO BE
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UNWORKABLE. AT WORST IT WOULD DAMAGE TRADITIONAL TIES

BETWEEN ITALIANS AND AMERICANS IN PRECISELY THOSE AREAS OF ITALY WHERE SUCH TIES ARE THE MOST NEEDED. THUS, THE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH EMBASSY'S PREFERENCE GRACEFULLY TO ACCEPT BICENTENNIAL EVENTS REGARDLESS OF LOCATION UNLESS IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PCI AIM IS TO CREATE A BLATANT PROPAGANDA VEHICLE FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES.

3. AS FOR PHILADELPHIA-FLORENCE AND BALTIMORE-BOLOGNA SISTER-CITY RELATIONSHIPS, DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT ON BALANCE THE US HAS MORE TO GAIN FROM THE PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED THAN WE HAVE TO LOSE FROM THE MODEST DIVIDENDS WHICH MIGHT ACCRUE TO THE PCI. A POLICY OF

ATTEMPTING TO ISOLATE OR BLACKLIST ITALIAN CITIES UNDER LEFTIST ADMINISTRATIONS WOULD LEAD TO CONFUSION AND RESENTMENT AMONG OUR FRIENDS THROUGHOUT ITALY. THUS, IF APPROACHED BY US SPONSORS OF A SISTER-CITY ARRANGEMENT, EMBASSY SHOULD POINT OUT COMMUNIST CHARACTER OF PROPOSED CITY (AND US VISA LAW APPLICABLE TO MEMBERS OF COMMUNIST PARTIES AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS) BUT NOT ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE OR FORBID SPONSORS FROM GOING AHEAD IF THAT IS THEIR WISH. IF APPROACHED BY ITALIANS, EMBASSY SHOULD ADOPT NEUTRAL STANCE SUGGESTING THAT PROPOSALS BE DISCUSSED DIRECTLY WITH US COUNTERPARTS, INFORMING DEPARTMENT OF ANY SUCH APPROACHES. KISSINGER

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